

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 4, 7, 9 and 11-16 have been amended. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 7-8, 13 and 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamashita II (U.S. Patent No. 5,873,009) in view of Baldwin (U.S. Patent No. 6,732,195) and Yamashita I (U.S. Patent No. 5,343,276). Claims 4-6, 9-12, 14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamashita II in view of Baldwin, Yamashita I and Yacoub (U.S. Patent No. 6,552,813). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections because none of the applied references, viewed alone or in combination, disclose or suggest the combination of limitations recited in the independent claims.

The independent claims recite a number of elements in combination. The claimed combination includes (a) a threshold value indicating an upper limit of a number of printouts permitted to be made *per week*, and (b) a threshold value indicating an upper limit of a number of printouts permitted to be made *per month*. The claimed combination further includes determining whether preventive maintenance for a printing machine is needed based on whether computed actual numbers of printouts *in a week* and/or printouts *in a month* exceed the respective threshold value. Support for these claim elements is found, for example, in Fig. 3C and the descriptions of page 23, line 19 to page 24, line 1.

This combination of elements is not disclosed or suggested by Yamashita I, Yamashita II, Baldwin or Yacoub, viewed alone or in combination. There is no teaching or suggestion in any of the cited references of a combination including a threshold value indicating an upper limit of a number of printouts permitted to be made *per week*, a threshold value indicating an upper limit of a number of printouts permitted to be made *per month*, and determining whether preventive maintenance is needed based on whether computed actual numbers of printouts *in a week* and/or printouts *in a month* exceed the respective threshold value. Accordingly, the rejections of the independent claims, and their corresponding dependent claims, should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to

withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. **116692005500**.

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Respectfully submitted,

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